

EDITORIAL COMMENT



SPANISH WAR NURSES' ITINERARY

THE itinerary of the trip to San Francisco which has been arranged for the meeting of the Spanish War Nurses, announcement of which will be found on another page, is one of the most attractive that we have ever seen. This is a rare opportunity to see a very interesting section of the country under most delightful conditions and for very little money. Every Spanish War nurse, or friend of a Spanish War nurse, who intends to take a vacation of any kind this year should avail herself of this chance. Travel is the best educator for hard-working people, and to know one's own country is much more important to nurses than to know Europe. A journey so long, if taken alone, involves much money, loss of time, and inevitable mistakes, and such an excursion as the one in question relieves the individual of all anxiety, as well as being a great saving of cost, and the social feature adds vastly to the general attractions.

THE CONVENTION OF SUPERINTENDENTS

THE announcement of the annual meeting of the Superintendents' Society is found in this issue. We understand that the social features will be made very attractive by the Pittsburg members, and plans should be made early to attend this meeting. October is a delightful month, and there is much of general interest which the superintendents need to consider at this time.

THE AUGUST NUMBER

THE August number of the JOURNAL will be given up entirely to the proceedings and papers of the annual convention of the Nurses' Associated Alumnae. There will be reprints, with cover, for filing and for libraries, and members desiring reprints should order them at once from the secretary, Miss Thornton.

There are still on hand a number of hundred copies of the report of last year (July number of THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING), for which application should also be made to Miss Thornton.

THE PRIZE ESSAY

IN another department is the announcement of two prizes of fifty dollars offered by the JOURNAL Company for the best essay on a subject of interest to both branches of the profession, with the hope of bringing out suggestions that will be of value in the great problem of preliminary training and the betterment of methods of teaching and training in our leading schools.

The condition must be rigidly adhered to, and the competitors must be women actively engaged in either private or hospital nursing. The names of the winners of the prizes will be announced in the October or November number.

THE MEETING IN BOSTON

THE annual meeting of the Nurses' Associated Alumnae has become a notable event in the year. There seemed to be nothing left to be said after Chicago, and yet in quite a different way Boston gave the members an equally good time.

The social features were charming, the business meetings were well attended, and the general spirit one of cordial good-fellowship. To those who were not present no adequate idea of the week as a whole can be given, and to the nurses and delegates who were so fortunate as to be there the event is too recent to require special comment.

WE shall doubtless be accused of plagiarism many times during the coming months, for, after listening to so many expressions of opinion upon such a variety of subjects, it is next to impossible to separate an idea as expressed by another from the train of thought which the idea suggested in one's own mind.

BUSINESS CONSIDERED

THE principal business before the convention was the consideration of the by-laws left unfinished last year, and again held over for future action. It seemed somewhat unwise to change the eligibility lines just now, as with the organization of State associations some provision for their affiliation would seem almost a necessity, while the educational standards of such organizations vary widely in the different States, and their future, from the standpoint of practical results, has yet to be proven. The Alumnae Association will have to decide at some near future day whether or not it will continue on strictly alumnae lines, or whether it will open its doors to the general and county clubs and State societies, with perhaps some loss at first in educational standards, but with a gain in a broader range of interests. Undoubtedly the State societies will very soon feel the need of State affiliation, and if such affiliation cannot be secured through the Nurses' Associated Alumnae some other form of organization will naturally follow. It is a problem for all of the affiliating alumnae associations to consider carefully during the year, that the delegates to whom the final decision will be entrusted may act wisely and for the best interests of the future of the profession.

Such broader affiliation need not necessarily affect the name of the Nurses' Associated Alumnae, as that title in its literal interpretation means simply an association of female graduate nurses. All members of local or State societies would be graduate nurses, and the name of the society could remain unaltered.

The idea of an organization maintaining high educational and ethical standards appeals to everyone, but a great national society, in which every form of nursing organization shall be affiliated, seems to loom up in the future, and it is to be hoped that the Associated Alumnae may, by good management, keep up its standards and at the same time meet the demands of the new forms of organization.

TRAINED ATTENDANTS

AMONG the suggested topics for discussion the subject of the trained attendant was given very brief consideration. The attitude of the trained nurse towards the trained attendant has never been clearly defined. It was shown by the United States census of 1900 that in a total of one hundred and eight thousand nurses recorded, less than twelve thousand were enrolled as "trained." This would indicate that the nursing profession is not numerically strong enough to do the entire nursing of the country if all irregular nurses and attendants were eliminated. The distinction between the trained and the untrained is to be created by State registration.

That trained attendants have a place is unquestioned. The difficulty now is that they do not remain in that place, but very soon are found caring for acute cases of illness where skill would seem to be indicated, and this by preference too often on the part of the physician.

DR. STONE'S SOLUTION

WE give in this issue a paper entitled "The Position of the Small Hospital in the Education of the Nurse," by Dr. Arthur K. Stone, of Boston, in which the writer, after reviewing the nursing situation, leads up to the subject of trained attendants. We discussed this subject with Dr. Stone some time since, however, and we know him to be very sincerely in earnest in his interest in his subject. As a member of the medical staff of the Massachusetts General Hospital, and as an officer of the school for training of attendants, he undoubtedly has expressed the views of many of his colleagues, and we feel that an occasional medical opinion on such subjects is necessary for intelligent coöperation on the part of nurses.

We are in sympathy with Dr. Stone on many points. What he says of the larger hospitals and of higher standards shows an appreciation of the highest nursing ideals.

That the public is demanding cheaper service for cases of moderate illness is perfectly true, and the nursing profession has not yet found a means of supplying the demand. Both the medical and nursing professions are concerned over the unsatisfactory conditions that exist at the present time.

We take great exception, however, to Dr. Stone's suggestion that the place of the small hospital in the future is to be for training an inferior class of women for cheaper grades of service. Occasionally a hospital may undertake the training of attendants upon the lines indicated by Dr. Stone, but we have too much respect for the quality of the work done in a great many small hospitals to believe that it will ever become necessary or feasible to so lower their standards.

There are other points in this paper upon which much might be said.

ONE OF THE DIFFICULTIES

ON general principles, medical men show a lack of knowledge of what nurses are trying to do for the uplifting of their profession. It is greatly to be lamented that the two professions—each so deeply concerned in the subject of nursing development—should be working independently and at cross-purposes in an attempt to secure practically the same result—i.e., better nurses, cheaper nurses, and a greater number of nurses to meet the public demand.

Just so long as this lack of coöperation continues, the chaotic conditions of the present will exist. We believe in attendants,—if they can be kept attendants,—but we do not believe in the lowering of educational standards in training-schools, either large or small, as a means of securing cheap service. It has been the lack of standards that has brought about the present attitude of general dissatisfaction towards nurses, and which it is now the special province and duty of nurses to rectify if nursing is ever to rank as a profession. We believe in the nurse's subordination to the physician in every detail of the treatment and care of the patient, but we feel strongly that the time has come when nurses should be permitted to outline the standards of education for the training-schools, and that in the employment of attendants a code of medico-nursing ethics is needed. We shall have more to say on this subject later.